

GREENWorks

Ideas for a Cleaner Environment

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Looking for Green During Peak Foliage?

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It's that time of year when every trip out the door provides a feast for your eyes. Tourism is in full swing and the roads are filled with visitors drinking it all in. So why an article on green leaf peeping, when everyone's out there looking for red, yellow and orange?

Climate change threatens to impact our foliage season. Species such as our state tree, the paper birch, as well as red and sugar maples, will not be able to survive in the projected warmer climate. Good enough reason to "green" our own leaf peeping trips, don't you think? So where can we start to keep it fun and green?

Check the Foliage Tracker map on www.visitnh.gov to see where the projected peak foliage is on the date of your travel. Instead of driving all over the state and seeing nature's beauty through a smudged car window, consider staying in one place to really develop a sense of what makes it special. Immerse yourself in the joys of a locale within that peak foliage region. Also think of lowering your carbon footprint! Take along some friends and carpool to really lower your greenhouse gas emissions.

You can find green lodging by going to the NH Sustainable Lodging & Restaurant Program's website, www.nhslrp.org, or connect to it through the Find Lodging link on the visitnh.gov website. Members of this program have made efforts to reduce their energy use, conserve water, reduce their waste (both overall and hazardous), and provide environmental education and encouragement to their employees and to you, their guests.

Inns and B&Bs are also well-known for connecting guests to local activities, points of interest, recreational activities and locally owned businesses. Take a hike to a local scenic vista or stroll through a bucolic town green to relax – taking in the postcard beauty without an overabundance of leaf-peeping photographers and packs of energetic children.

Choosing locally grown foods greens your trip, too. Find a farmers market or roadside stand to purchase local bounty such as fresh apples, cider and cheese to enjoy on a picnic or once home. (Don't forget your cooler!) Purchasing locally grown products reduces the greenhouse gases that would be generated by transporting products from distant locations. (Did you know that food in our grocery stores travels on average 1500 miles before it reaches us?!) Many restaurants feature local items on their menus – ask for dining suggestions from local shops or the place you're

staying. The NHSLRP website also has a growing list of restaurants that have committed themselves to more sustainable ways of serving you a delectable meal.

To be really green, you don't even have to plan a getaway – try looking at your surrounding community like a visitor would. To really green your leaf peeping, try the above suggestions within 20 miles of your home. Contact your town's conservation commission and see where there are town trails. Spend an afternoon at the edge of a local lake (or on it if you have a kayak or canoe!) or take in the last of a garden's fragrant gifts from a comfy chair in your own backyard. Enjoying a local microbrew or bottle of wine makes it just the about the perfect way to frame your own New Hampshire postcard.

Be creative and have fun – greening your next autumn adventure will make you feel good about your journey.

(Note: The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and the NH Sustainable Lodging & Restaurant Program signed a partnership agreement on April 14, 2009 to further their common goal of environmental stewardship at hospitality businesses throughout the state. For more information about the DES Partners Program, visit http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/partners_program.htm.)